

Moving Objects Along a Path

The previous exercise showed how you can make objects move all over the Stage in short, point-to-point hops. For a ball that bounces off the walls, ceiling, and floor, that's appropriate, but for other objects, you want movements that are softer, trajectories that are arcs, not straight lines. You could achieve this effect by stringing together many point-to-point keyframes, but Flash offers a more efficient method: the motion guide.

A motion guide is an object you create on a special separate layer. The motion guide defines the path for a linked, tweened object to follow. One motion guide layer can control objects on several layers. The motion path layer governs any layers linked to it. The linked layers are defined as *guided layers* in the Layer Properties dialog box.

If you want different objects to follow different paths, you can create several motion guide layers within a single Flash document. Each motion guide governs the actions of objects on its own set of linked layers.

To add a motion guide layer:

1. Create a new Flash document containing a ten-frame motion tween. In the first frame, place a circle in the upper-left corner of the Stage. In the last frame, place a circle in the lower-right corner of the Stage.

Your document should resemble **Figure 9.21**.

2. Select the layer that contains the tweened object you want to move along a path.
3. At the bottom of the Timeline, click the Add Guide Layer button.

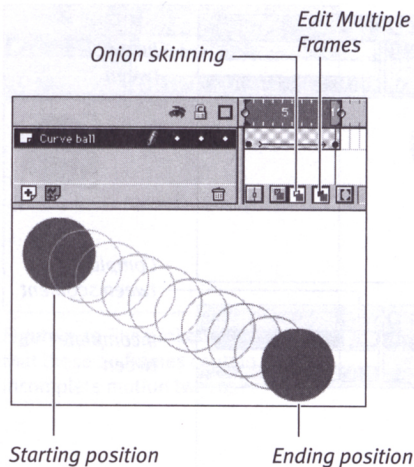


Figure 9.21 The first step to creating a tweened object that follows a path is to define a motion tween with the object in the beginning and ending position you want. Here the object moves from the beginning to the end in a straight line. (Onion skinning and Edit Multiple Frames are selected to show all the tween's components.)